NATHANIEL DAVIS
... on job five months

Top Aide To Quit at State Dept.

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Assistant Secretary of State Nathaniel Davis is resigning after only five months as head of the bureau of African affairs, plagued by African suspicion that linked him to CIA operations in Chile.

Davis, a 50-year-old career diplomat, decided that "he is working against too many psychological obstacles" to overcome the opposition to his appointment from African leaders and from the congressional Black Caucus, an associate said yesterday.

Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, incensed by the opposition to Davis which he said was totally unwarranted, insisted last spring on pushing through the appointment, labeling it a matter of principle.

In an unusually sharp message to the Organization of African Unity, Kissinger at that time reproached African leaders for intruding on "a purely internal domestic concern"—the appointment of an assistant secretary of state. OAU opposition to Davis, from leaders so sensitive about outside interference in their affairs, was ironic, Kissinger contended.

The African opposition, led by Zaire President Mobutu Sese Seko, centered on Davis' service as U.S. ambassador to Chile in 1973 when President Salvador Allende was overthrown and lost his life.

The subsequently disclosed extensive operations of the Central Intelligence Agency in Chile were cited in Africa as evidence of what lay ahead for that continent through the Davis appointment.

Deputy Secretary of State Robert S. Ingersoll called in

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all 33 African ambassadors or mission chiefs stationed in Washington last March, while the Davis appointment was pending, to try to convince them of the validity of Davis' disclaimers of any responsibility for the coup. Rep. Charles B. Rangel (D-N.Y.), chairman of the congressional Black Caucus, charged that this was an improper interference.

Davis was confirmed, sworn in on April 2, and entered the job determined to convince African leaders he was committed to their interests. He went to Africa in June. His timing was unfortunate.

Davis was traveling through Africa when the state-controlled press in Zaire announced the discovery of a plot by army dissidents in Zaire to overthrow President Mobutu and charged the United States with "financing and directing" the attempted coup.

Mobutu had been troubled himself in the past by charges of African critics that he was "an American stooge." With the Zaire government now charging CIA complicity in the plot against him, Mobutu ordered the expulsion of the U.S. ambassador to Zaire, Deane R. Hinton.

Davis, in Nairobi, Kenya, countered that American investigations proved the allegations against the United States were "totally devoid of fact."

In an effort to repair relations personally, Davis tried to go to Zaire for the American July 4 celebration at the U.S. embassy in Kinshasa, informed sources said yesterday. Zaire, according to a Davis associate, refused him entry to the country.

There were other African rebuffs to Davis. An attempt to enter Mozambique during his tour also was rejected, one source said yesterday.

The State Department in late June sent Sheldon B. Vance, special assistant to the Secretary of State and former U.S. ambassador to Zaire, to persuade President Mobutu the United States had nothing to do with the alleged plot to overthrow him.

There have been more tangible U.S. overtures. The United States, according to informed sources, has put together a proposed $60 million aid program for Zaire. This plan has yet to be submitted to Congress.

Other programs to improve relations with African nations have been concluded or are in progress. They include $5 million worth of military aircraft for Kenya, informed sources said, and the shipment of F-5 fighter aircraft to Ethiopia.